

Appl. No. 09/683,914
Amdt. Dated October 18, 2004
Reply to Office Action of June 18, 2004

REMARKS

Applicants hereby acknowledge the Office Action mailed on June 18, 2004. Applicants request re-examination of the present application in view of the following remarks.

Specification Amendments

The Examiner objected to the specification for minor informalities. Applicants assert the amendments set forth above correct any typographical errors in the cited paragraphs. Thus, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection.

Claim Amendments

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for failing to distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention. Specifically, claim 1 previously included a reference to "a second predetermined thickness" without first claiming a "first predetermined thickness." In addition, claims 1 and 6 each recited the allegedly unclear term "chrome." All remaining pending claims were rejected as being dependent from the rejected base claims.

Applicants have amended claims 1 and 6 by replacing the term "chrome" with "chromium." In addition, Applicants have also amended claim 1 to add a step of "providing a steel strip having a *first* predetermined thickness..." (emphasis added). Applicants assert that these claim amendments overcome the claim rejections set forth under 35 U.S.C. § 112.

In the Office Action, the Examiner indicates "claims 6-14 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph." Accordingly, with the above amendments, Applicants assert claims 6-14 are in condition for allowance.

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AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to Figure 2 and further include formal drawings incorporating the changes to Figure 2. These sheets replace the original Figures 1 and 2. No changes have been made to Figure 1. In Figure 2, Element 27 has been revised to state "Cleaning the Bumpers" and Element 29 has been revised to state "Polishing the Bumpers." In addition, Element 30 has been revised to state "Electroplating/Coating the Bumpers with Nickel and Chromium."

Attachment: Replacement Sheets
Annotated Sheet Showing Changes

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based upon the disclosure of JP 02-274866 in view of U.S. Patent 5,438,179 or U.S. Patent 5,459,297 both granted to Boppel et al. In making this rejection, the Examiner asserts: "JP '866 discloses cold rolling a steel sheet followed by coating the steel with nickel and chromium."

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's contention that the '866 reference is properly combinable with the Boppel patents. However, in order to more quickly progress to issuance, Applicants have amended claim 1 in order to specify that the blank be coated first with Nickel and *then* with Chromium (emphasis added). The art relied upon by the Examiner does not teach this.

The '866 reference discloses adding a layer of Chromium to a cold rolled sheet via electroplating. The '866 reference then discloses adding a layer of Nickel or Nickel alloy to the Chromium. The '866 reference further requires subjecting the sheet to a diffusion treatment. Thus, the '866 reference sets forth steps directly in opposite to that set forth in amended claim 1.

In addition, the Boppel patents are silent as to chroming a sheet. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that claim 1 is allowable over the combination of the '866 reference and the Boppel patents. These references do not teach, in the least, coating a blank with Nickel and then Chromium. Furthermore, Applicants further assert claims 2-5 are also in condition for allowance, as these claims ultimately depend from claim 1.

Claim 15

Applicants add claim 15 in order to better define the subject matter regarded as the invention. Claim 15 does not add new matter to the pending application, and Applicants believe claim 15 is allowable over the prior art.

Drawing Amendments

Applicants have amended Figure 2, as set forth above, in order to ensure the figure properly corresponds with the specification of the application.

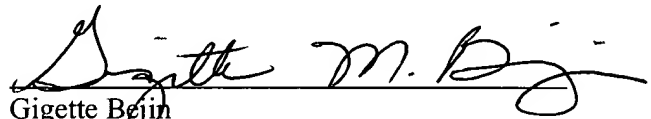
CONCLUSION

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For the reasons set forth above, Applicants believe all pending claims are allowable over the prior art. Moreover, Applicants further believe the specification and drawings are also in condition for allowance. Accordingly, allowance of the pending application is courteously solicited. If any further amendment is necessary to advance the prosecution and place the application into condition for allowance, Applicants request the Examiner contact the undersigned via fax or telephone at the numbers listed below.

Please charge any cost incurred in the filing of this Amendment, along with any other costs, to Deposit Account 06-1510. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the one month extension fee in the amount of \$110.00 from Deposit Account No. 06-1510. To the extent additional fees or credits are warranted, the Commissioner is authorized to charge or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 06-1510. If there are insufficient funds in this account, please charge the fees to Deposit Account No. 06-1505.

Respectfully submitted,

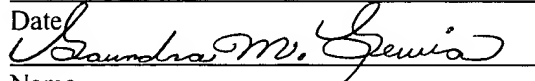


Gigette Begjin
Registration No. 44,027
FORD GLOBAL TECHNOLOGIES
600 Parklane Towers East
Dearborn, MI 48126
Telephone: (313) 337-2966
Fax: (313) 322-7162

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on

October 18, 2004

Date



Name

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FIGURE 2

